

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

REAL ID ACT OF 2005

SPEECH OF

HON. LORETTA SANCHEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 10, 2005

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 418) to establish and rapidly implement regulations for State driver's license and identification document security standards, to prevent terrorists from abusing the asylum laws of the United States, to unify terrorism-related grounds for inadmissibility and removal, and to ensure expeditious construction of the San Diego border fence.

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 418—the REAL ID Act. This bill both distorts and undermines the bipartisan recommendations of the 9/11 Commission which were crafted to make Americans safer and more secure.

The REAL ID Act actually deletes key 9/11 recommendations which were codified in law by the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004, provisions that have yet to be enacted,

Specifically, the REAL ID Act deletes driver's license provisions from the 2004 bill. Proponents of the REAL ID Act argue that this country needs national standards for driver's licenses and State identification documents. The 9/11 Commission took this issue very seriously and issued recommendations which were included in the House, Senate and White House-approved bill. The legislation expressly orders the Department of Transportation, the Department of Homeland Security, and States to work together to set national standards for driver's licensees.

The REAL ID Act removes this provision and instead imposes an inflexible Federal statute for our State governments. The 9/11 Commission legislation was intended to ensure that the States would have a voice in crafting national standards; it did not suggest that the Federal Government hijack the right of States to issue identification to their residents.

The bill also enacts tough new immigration provisions that could bar legitimate asylum seekers from receiving refuge in the United States. It also restricts the right of judges to review decisions by immigration officials at the borders to reject asylum applications. In truth, victims of torture and other forms of persecution could actually be deported into the hands of their persecutors, a reality that runs contrary to our fundamental values of freedom and liberty.

Even the White House has expressed reservations about the asylum provisions in the bill, and has already called for modifications “to ensure the changes do not unintentionally create new barriers to asylum.”

I believe we need to keep our focus where it belongs, on identifying and apprehending terrorists, and on making our country more se-

cure. We should adhere to the laws enacted by the President and both houses of Congress, and give them a chance to work before we begin repealing them.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 14, 2005

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I regret that I missed two votes on bills last week to designate the U.S. courthouse in Jacksonville, FL, as the “John Milton Bryan Simpson United States Courthouse” and the Federal building and U.S. courthouse in Dayton, OH, as the “Tony Hall Federal Building and United States Courthouse.” Had I been present for rollcall votes Nos. 21 and 22, I would have voted “yea.”

TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE DONALD E. BELFI

HON. CAROLYN MCCARTHY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 14, 2005

Mrs. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor that I rise today to pay tribute to a dear friend and devoted public servant, the Honorable Donald E. Belfi. Mr. Belfi is retiring as Nassau County Court Judge after 44 years of dedicated service to the court.

A long and distinguished history of accomplishment and community leadership marks Judge Belfi's career. A graduate of Georgetown University and Fordham University School of Law, Mr. Belfi has committed himself to serving the public as a member of the legal profession.

After several years of service as Assistant District Attorney in both New York and Nassau Counties, and 10 years of service as Nassau County District Court Judge, Mr. Belfi earned the post of Nassau County Court Judge. As County Court Judge for more than 20 years, Judge Belfi presided over hundreds of criminal trials, many of which were high profile cases. Among these is the Colin Ferguson Long Island Railroad Case, a matter I hold close to my heart. On a personal level, this was the first time I had ever been exposed to the court system. Judge Belfi held the dignity of his courtroom every day, making the trial bearable for me, my family and so many of the victims of the Long Island Railroad massacre.

Judge Belfi's commitment to the community does not end inside the courtroom. Mr. Belfi has served as commissioner of Rockville Centre Little League, and as a member of several notable groups, including the Knights of Columbus, the Association for the Help of Retarded Children, and the St. Agnes Cathedral Parish Council. He also contributed over 20

years to Georgetown University as both an interviewer and a recruiter for the school. Widely recognized throughout the community, Judge Belfi's efforts and achievements have been rewarded with countless honors. Among these is the Fraternal Order of Court Officers Bench and Bar Award, the Criminal Courts Bar Association's Norman F. Lent Award, the Fordham Law Alumni Association Distinguished Alumnus Award, the DeStefano Industries Annual Award, and the Court Officer's Benevolent Association of Nassau County Fidelis Juris Award.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me today in congratulating Judge Belfi on his admirable career, and recognizing his numerous accomplishments. I cannot even begin to express my deep gratitude and appreciation for his service to the community. Together with his wife of 35 years, five children, and two grandchildren, I send him my sincerest wishes for happiness and fulfillment as he begins this next chapter of his life.

ARTICLE BY RABBI ISRAEL ZOBERMAN

HON. THELMA D. DRAKE

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 14, 2005

Mrs. DRAKE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to call your attention to the following article written by my constituent, Rabbi Israel Zoberman. Rabbi Zoberman is the spiritual leader of Congregation Beth Chaverim in Virginia Beach. A son of Polish Holocaust survivors, he grew up in Haifa, Israel. He is past President of the Hampton Roads Board of Rabbis and Cantors.

The final departure of Chairman Yasser Arafat is of one who eluded death many a time. During Israel's 1982 incursion into Lebanon to remove the menacing PLO mini-state within a state it was, ironically, Ariel Sharon, then Defense Minister, who ordered a sniper who “had” Arafat not to kill him. This is an opportunity to reflect on a man who could have made a critical difference and yet was not able to seize a unique offer granted him for radical self-transformation as well as a collective transition for his long-enduring people. How redemptive it would have been to break the deadly cycle of Palestinian missed opportunities!

In a fateful moment of truth in 2000 Arafat rebuffed former Prime Minister Barak's most forthcoming offer that would by now have guaranteed statehood in a favorable context to his frustrated people. It also would have prevented the flow of calculated bloodshed which the stubborn refusal and far-reaching blunder in judgment brought about. For the past four years Arafat unleashed with a nod of approval an unparalleled torrent of terrorist suicide bombings against Israel's civilian population that no nation would have tolerated for that long, and then many even decried the erection of a defensive barrier.

Arafat, the father of contemporary terrorism, was already uninhibited early on in his choice of terror as a means to accomplish

• This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.